(b) if so, what steps Government are proposing to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) and (b) A request from the Government of Andhra Pradesh to waive the outstanding interest of Rs. 663 crores accrued during VIII Plan in respect of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited has been received in the Ministry of Coal. This is part of an overall rehabilitation plan submitted by the Company. The proposal is under examination.

Incidence in Coal Mines

4292. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Society for Participating Research in Asia has studied the incidence of Pnumoconiosis in coal mines;

(b) if so, the detail of the findings of the study; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to reduce incidence of this disease in coal mines in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) This Ministry and its formations are not aware of any such study conducted by the Society for Participating Research in Asia for the incidence of Pnumoconiosis in coal mines.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

(c) The disease is commonly known to be a reaction of the human body to excessive exposure to coal dust. In order to reduce exposure to coal dust measures to reduce the dust exposure have been laid down under the Coal Mines Regulations 1957, framed under the Mines Act, 1952. These give the maximum permissible limits of dust exposure, the technical guidelines for conducting airborne dust survey, the measures to be taken when the airborne dust content approaches the limits or crosses the limits and general measures for dust suppression to be undertaken in Coal Mines in India. These regulations are implemented in the mines of Coal India Limited. Under the relevant provisions of the Mines Rules 1955, medical examination of all workmen employed in coal mines is done once in every five years. In course of such examination known as periodic medical examination (PME) workers are subjected to radiological and pathological examination and such examination reveals the effecct of dust.

Coal India Limited has set up medical facilities with most advanced equipment operated by trained personnel. For this purpose 82 PME Centres have been provided and 49 Nos. International Labour Organisation standard X-Ray film sets provided for comparing with the X-Ray plates of workmen. Ninety four doctors have been especially trained for this purpose, out of whom fifty have been trained in U.K.

Recruitment in MCC Ltd.

4293. SHRI BHAGBAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the recruitment taken place since the formation of Mahanadi Coal Company Ltd. (MCCL) in its coal fields;

(b) the year-wise details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a fact that the local youths are not being given employment in that Company as compared to the appointment being given to the outsiders who do not belong to Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Details of recruitments made in Mahanadi Coalfields Limited since its formation i.e., from 3.4.92 to 30.12.97 are as under:—

Jr. Overman/Mining Sirdar	92
Mine Surveyor/Surveyor (Trainee)	9
Foreman/Diploma Holder	86
Overseer (Civil)	6
Stenographer	19
Clerk/Typist	11
Jr. Technical Inspector	4
Driver	25
Security Guard	3
Accountant	8
Para Medical staff	66
HEMM operator	157
Technician ITI	564
TOTAL	1050